

Newsletter

Winter 2019

www.paragonha.org.uk

HOME - Help on Managing Everything

In September this year Paragon partnered with LinkLiving, the care and support subsidiary of the Link Group, to launch a project offering tenancy support with a difference. A one to one support project, it is open to any of our tenants who feel they need an extra bit of help. The type of support the HoME team might help with is:

- Help with maintaining your home
- Issues with neighbours
- Managing income and bills
- Keeping safe physically and emotionally
- Asking for help if you need it
- How to be involved with your community
- Volunteering/work experience
- Digital skills

Get in touch with our Tenancy Management Team if you want to find out more. If the service is for you, the Team will pass on your details and you will be contacted by one of the two support workers, Amanda Humphrey or Moira Georgeson.

Amanda says "This is a new project initially set up by LinkLiving for Link Housing Association tenants which we are now delighted to be partnering with Paragon specifically for your tenants. It helps tenants to maintain and sustain their tenancies and hopefully feel included within the community. We support tenants with a diverse range of challenges, e.g. mental health issues, substance misuse, hoarding, financial issues and social isolation. I enjoy helping folk maintain their tenancies and making a difference to their everyday life."

Moira said "I enjoy getting to know tenants and to see them move on with their lives. We have currently set up a drop in community café for people involved in the HoME project which runs every Thursday. This allows tenants to meet up and hopefully build friendships. They help run the café and set up activities of their choice which will meet everyone's needs."

Involved in the HoME Project? Why not drop in? HoME Community Café Every Thursday 10 - 12 Link Academy, McKinven House, George Street, Falkirk FK2 7EY

Contact Amanda on **07564 839069** for more information.



INVESTMENT UPDATE

Around the Houses

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

On Site

Various projects are currently underway on site or plans well progressed: **At a glance**

- External Wall Insulation Stirling /Denny/Fallin (phased over 2 years 2018/19 and 2019/20)
- Electrical Upgrade 4 year framework agreement is in place and will include new smoke and heat alarms
- **Boiler Renewals** Fairyburn and Upper Claremount in Alloa, Holbourne in Menstrie, Orkney Place in Hallglen and some other one-off sites
- Painterwork and mid cycle gutter cleaning Clackmannanshire (part) and Stirling (gutters only)
- Open Space Maintenance ongoing contract in Stirling and Clackmannanshire procurement underway – tender closing date is mid November and assessment is underway

As usual we will be in contact with the tenants involved in the work to give them more details as the work gets underway.

Reminder – Check That ID

Just a reminder to ensure that you check the ID of anyone who calls and says they are carrying out work or visits on our behalf. If you are not sure about anyone then contact us at the office. We are more than happy to help and it's better to check it out if you are unsure.

Quick reminder!

Just a quick reminder that we issued an **Investment Programme Special Newsletter** to all tenants earlier in the year setting out forward plans by house type. If you need another copy please contact the Programme & Regeneration Team (P&R Team).

Heat and Smoke Detector Programme Update

In previous newsletters we told you about the Scottish Government's new standards for fire and smoke alarms which are required to be fitted in all homes. Housing Associations have until February 2021 to comply with this and G.D. Chalmers is the contractor appointed to do the work.

The P&R Team have set up a display board to demonstrate how the new systems work and are preparing a "Quick Guide" leaflet for users and they will show you how these radio linked alarms work. One really useful feature is a single test button which tests all the alarms and is sited on the wall – so no more ladders required to do the tests.

Please help us out by providing access for this essential work. It is safety work so we will need to get access to your home. Your co-operation would be most appreciated.

Police Scotland offer good advice on their about how to look out for Door Step Crime and Bogus Callers so it might be worth having a look.

www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/personal-safety/ doorstep-crime-and-bogus-callers

Stay Safe & Warm -Gas Maintenance & Safety Check

Just a reminder to make sure you arrange access if the contractor needs in to your home to do your annual gas safety check and service. Please make the necessary arrangements or we will have to force entry and bill you for the costs.



The Open Space Maintenance contract for the Stirling and Clackmannanshire areas is currently out to tender.

A Focus Group of interested tenants, owners and community council members have been doing some excellent ground work to draw up a "specification" of what should be included in the scope of the work to be done. Owners have to pay a share of the works in line with any Title Deed obligations and rent money is used to pay for the tenants' share of the work so it is good to work together to try to ensure best value for all.

The Group members have worked alongside our staff and specialist consultants including a landscape clerk of works. Areas represented on the Group include Stirling, Plean, Alloa and Menstrie. The Group agreed that the contract should:

- Be let as one "lot" to achieve best value and not split by Clackmannanshire/Stirling areas
- Be awarded on the basis of a cost/quality basis
- Include a requirement for the successful contractor to provide a planned works programme with indicative dates

The tender closes in mid November and the appointment is for 3 years from April 2020. We would like to extend our thanks to the members of the group for contributing to the project and if anyone is interested in getting involved please contact Pauline Ramsay our Contracts Liaison Officer on **01324 664966** or via **enquiries@paragonha.org.uk.**



There are no new build sites on the go at the moment but we are operating a buy back scheme in the Falkirk Council area with the support of some funding from the Scottish Government. This is the BBOOM project and it has helped us provide more homes, upgrade these properties and some common facilities where the presence of an owner in the block has stopped us going ahead. We are mainly purchasing properties in our estates but may consider others.

If any owners in the Falkirk district are interested in selling their properties to the Association please get in touch with Charlene Syme, Senior Housing Officer. There are specific conditions attached including the property having vacant possession.



Waste collection continues to be a problematic issue across the 3 council areas where we provide housing. Tenants pay for waste collection through their council tax to the local authority but more and more we are finding that the Association is faced with bills relating to waste collection, disposal and flytipping.

In the areas where we have a concentration of flats we are finding high incidences of dumping and contaminated bins. In other areas changes in waste collection arrangements and charges are affecting tenants and residents. The impact is that the Association is having to find more and more money to pay for the clear up.

Share Your

In September this year, we had to arrange for 3 of these larger Euro bins to be emptied at a cost of £50 per bin. That's £150.



We are working with the relevant council departments to improve matters but waste collection is having a significant impact on expenditure which is paid for through rents. A single contaminated bin costs £15 to have emptied. We don't usually pay to have individual bins emptied but there are occasions, for example when a property is empty, when we do. In September we spent £2460.09 on rubbish – that is £20.64 per tenancy per year.

As part of this year's rent consultation we will be looking at the approach tenants want us to take towards rubbish in their estates and how we pay for clear ups. Here are some of the types of questions we are considering:

- Should we consider Paragon run special uplift service for tenants?
- How should that be paid for?
- Would people be willing to volunteer for litter picks?
- Would people be willing to volunteer as street / block champions to work along side the Estates Team?
- Visit www.magentaliving.org.uk/ block-champions to see an example of champions in action in a housing organisation in the Wirral
- Can we set up a recycling service?
- Communal composting facilities where garden waste no longer collected?

£105.00

£2,460.09

A single contaminated bin costs £15 to have emptied. In September we spent £105 on emptying 'single' contaminated bins.

The amount we spent on rubbish for the month of September 2019 – equivalent of £20.64 per tenancy over the course of a year.



Mess like this cost the Association thousands of pounds a year to clear, in September this year we had to organise uplifts at a cost in the region of £1,500.

Rubbish Ideas!





Gill Park Residents and Tenants Association in Denny organised a litter pick.



Some communities have already taken steps to deal with litter and waste and we are working with them and local authorities.

In October the Estates Team partnered with Falkirk Council to hold a Waste Management Event in Grangemouth. Residents were welcomed along to find out about recycling, litter prevention and promoting green dog walking. The local volunteer group the Glitter Team – Let's Get Grangemouth Clean were there too and they are doing a sparkling job cleaning up the town. You can find out more about what they are up to by visiting their Facebook page. In October the very active and enthusiastic Gill Park Residents and Tenants Association in Denny organised a litter pick in their area. Evelyn Mathershaw, Housing Manager and Marie McKay, Assistant Estates Officer went along to lend a hand. The group has a Facebook page with lots of information on local events and services that may be of use to you.

> **Be in the know!** - find out more about our On Site Events on page 6.

Finding out about recycling at the Waste Management Event



Too **B G** for the Bin?

Local councils operate schemes for bulky uplifts and charges may be applied. They have local recycling facilities – otherwise known and the "tip" where you can dispose of your rubbish if you take it along. Check your local council's for details of these schemes in your area.

There are possible alternatives to using these facilities:

- Check out Zero Waste Scotland's main web site and find out how your junk could be reused www.zerowastescotland.org.uk
- Visit Recycle For Scotland www.recycleforscotland.com you can fill in an online form or give them a call on 0800 0665 820 and you may able to get items uplifted for free.



CONTINUED...

On Site Events – Be in the know

The Estates Team have been organising on site events including Estate Walkabouts, Community Safety session, Recycling Awareness sessions, Dogs Trust events and more. It's a great chance to find out what is going on and an opportunity for you to meet our staff onsite.

Keep checking our for news of any events that the Estates Team is planning – just go to our Home page and there will be a news link to tell you what is happening.



Views & Ideas

If you have a view or an idea that you would like to share with us then please contact Charlene Syme Senior Housing Officer on **01324 664966**.

Keep an eye on it



If you are aware of dumping please contact our Estates Team as soon as you can – a photo and the address and date and time details are helpful.

Estates Team Contacts

Estates Officer: Claire Rowland Assistant Estates Officer: Marie McKay Housing Management Support Assistant: Kirsten Gibson

Phone 01324 664966

E mail estates@paragonha.org.uk

Calling budding Jamie Olivers or Mary Berrys!

Got a favourite soup recipe you would like to share with everyone and have a chance to win a prize?

As part of our Healthy Working Lives Award we are challenging you to send us your favourite soup recipe and we will pick one out to make a pot for a healthy staff lunch during February.

We are looking for recipes which are based on healthy ingredients and can be made by cooking novices. We will publish the winning recipes in the next newsletter.

We will be offering prizes for the top 3 received including a prize from any entrant 16 or under.

The judges will be our Healthy Working Lives Group.

Closing Date: 15th January 2020

Send your favourite recipe to:

enquiries@paragonha.org.uk or post/hand in to the office. Remember to include your contact details and include your age if you are 16 or under.

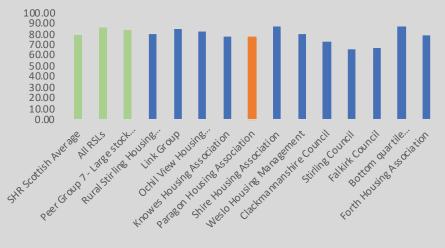


How are we doing?

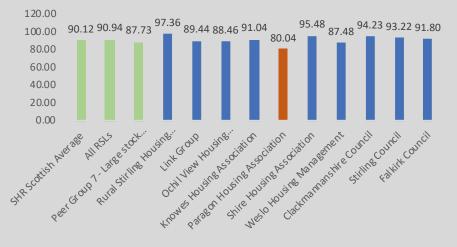
Value for money

Although Council Rents are traditionally lower than Housing Association Rents, Paragon's rents continue to compare well with other Housing Association's in the area. However our Value for Money score (in the Tenant Satisfaction Survey) is lower than we would like. We are working with Scottish Housing Network to look at Value for Money Indicators and as part of our rent consultation this year will be looking closely at affordability and the relative cost of the Housing Services we provide.

Average Weekly Rents



Satisfaction with overall service



Our rent rates score at 70.42% on the value for money scale

Our tenants are 80.04% satisfied with overall service

Our tenants are 87.08% satisfied with being kept informed

Could you spare some time to help us improve the service we offer? If so why not come and get involved in our Tenant Scrutiny Group? Phone us on 01324 664966 if you'd like to find out more.

There was a preview of our performance in the Summer Newsletter and our full ARC Report can be found on our web site. We are never complacent about performance and recognise that there is always room for improvement. You can find our ARC Report on our and you can give us feedback on our web form at:

www.paragonha.org.uk/facts-figures/ performance-figures-charter-report www.paragonha.org.uk/facts-figures/ annual-charter-feedback-form-2019

If doing it on line is not for you,

please contact us for a copy of our ARC report and if you would like to get more involved or give us some feedback then please contact Evelyn Mathershaw, Housing Manager on **01324 664966** email **enquiries@paragonha.org.uk**.

Download our ARC Report at: www.paragonha.org.uk/facts-figures/performance-figures-charter-report

Registered Tenant Organisations

Paragon encourages tenants and residents living in Paragon estates to join a local tenants and residents groups. We work with 2 registered groups. We would like to encourage more and we can provide funding and other help and support.

We are also members of the Tenant's Information Service (TIS) which is a leading organisation promoting and inspiring innovative tenant participation practice in Scotland. They provide independent advice, support, and training for tenants and landlords across Scotland. They bring together the skills to help tenants and landlords work together more effectively. Earlier on this year we worked with TIS on the 'Next Steps Programme'. TIS, our tenants and staff developed a Tenant Participation action plan. It's on our at www.paragonha.org.uk/your-views/ tenant-participation or email or call us and we can provide you with a copy.

Sharon Donohoe of TIS told us about support they could offer anyone thinking of starting their own group.

"At TIS, we can provide you with the relevant tools to support your goals and establish a local tenants' and residents' association in your local community or wider area."

Tenants and residents across the Scottish social housing sector have joined together with their neighbours to have their say, and influence decisions about the housing services that they receive by working together, with their landlords.

The benefits of starting a tenants'

and residents' association:

- To bring to light the issues that affect a majority of people with the local community such as: repairs, housing services, anti-social behaviour, dampness, housing transfers, and regeneration of neighbourhoods etc.
- To improve and change your local communities for the better
- To have a strong, representative voice and provide the means for tenants to communicate with their landlord
- To share accurate and up to date advice and information with the local community

Find out more or **Get in Touch** - **www.tis.org.uk**

For further information and to start your journey to establishing a tenants' and residents' association, call **0141 248 1242** or email **info@tis.org.uk**

Get in Touch / Tenant Participation Call us on 01324 664966

Housing Manager: Evelyn Mathershaw
Senior Housing Officer: Charlene Syme

Phone	01324 664966
E mail	enquiries@paragonha.org.uk

Want to share your views on the Tenant Participation Strategy (TP strategy)?

Tenant Scrutiny – 2019/20 Dates for your diary:

- Monday 10th January 2020 Rent Consultation Focus Group
- Friday 7th February 2020
 Scrutiny Panel Meeting

We know everyone can't come along to meetings and may want other ways to be involved, so why not become an 'Armchair Scrutineer'. All it involves is spending an hour or two at home each month looking over policies and procedures and giving your views to the Scrutiny Panel.

If you want more information or are willing to be involved then - **Get In Touch**!

There are lots of ways to get involved!

Could you spare some time to help us improve the service we offer? If so why not come and get involved in our Tenant Scrutiny Group? Phone us on 01324 664966 if you'd like to find out more.

Local Groups

Gill Park Residents and Tenants Association

The Gill Park RTA have been very active and we are working alongside them on a number of things – most recently on their Litter Pick (see page 5).

The group meets every third Tuesday of the month from 7.30 to 9.00 pm, except July, August and December, at Denny Baptist Church, Herbertshire Street, Denny.

They would love to hear from you.

Contact: James Harris Email: residents.tenants@btinternet.com

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Fishcross and Benview Residents Association

The Fishcross and Benview Residents Association is active in the Fishcross and Sauchie area. Their activities have included providing tubs for summer plants in partnership with the Community Council, organising a seniors' Christmas meal and taking part in the Fishcross Primary School Christmas Fayre.

Open Meetings:

10th March 2020	Public Meeting
9th June 2020	Public Meeting

7.00 pm Legends Pool Hall, Fishcross

If you want to find out more about the group please contact them.

Contact:

Email: fbdhra2010@hotmail.co.uk Telephone: 07561151768

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Clackmannanshire Tenants & Residents Association – (CTRF) The "Fed"

Clacks Fed is a well established umbrella group for tenants and residents associations, community councils, other community organisations and interested individuals within the Clackmannanshire area. We are currently working with them, Clackmannanshire Council and the Tenants Information Service on updating our joint Tenant Participation Strategy.

If you are interested in finding out more about their work and services please contact them.

Contact:

Address: 8 Bank St, Alloa FK10 1HP Phone: 01259 725757 Email: clackstf@btinternet.com

RENT MATTERS

Rent Increase 2020/21 Consultation

Over the next couple of months we will be in touch with you to consult on the annual rent increase that will apply from April 2020. Last year we did a phone survey and postal survey and got a good level of response with around 14% of tenants feeding back to us. We also provided an online form but there was little take up of that option. We provided feedback to tenants through our Rent Special Newsletter issued in February 2019.

Look out for details of the Rent Consultation Exercise and we will put information on our . So if you want to be involved over and above participating in a survey then please contact Evelyn Mathershaw on **01324 664966** email **enquiries@paragonha.org.uk**.



Ways to Pay

Rent is due monthly in advance on the 29th of each month. If you would prefer we can offer you a weekly payment arrangement but you must agree this with us.

The Association offers a wide range of ways you can pay:

- Bank Standing Order or by Internet Banking
- Allpay card which can be used at the Post Office or any shop / outlet displaying a Paypoint sign.
- Online using an Allpay card you have to register your card www.allpayments.net
- In person at the office
- Debit card by phone or in person (Credit Cards not accepted). Call 01324 664966 – we will send you a receipt
- By post by cheque to the office we will send you a receipt

Problems? Don't Panic - please speak to us!

We are here to help - contact the Tenancy Management Team immediately if you are unable to keep up with your rent payments. The Tenancy Management Team can

arrange for you to repay your arrears by installments over an agreed period of time. Your installment payments can be made on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis and we will negotiate payments with you.



Remember to take account of our festive season opening times if you pay your rent at the office or by phone. Check out page 12 for details of Festive Season Opening Times. The office will be open on Christmas Eve, 30th and 31st December if you need to pay rent at the office or by phone.





Annual General Meeting

Another well attended Annual General Meeting was held on 18th September 2019. The business included the presentation of the Annual Report and Annual Accounts and election of Management Committee members. We are delighted to announce that Malcolm Richards one of our tenant members was elected to the Management Committee. Malcolm is a stalwart of the Tenant Scrutiny Group so he has a great deal of experience to offer.

Officers Line Up

Following the AGM, the officers of the Management Committee were elected and we have an experienced team in place:

Chair - Flora Wallace Joint Vice Chair – Michael Hesketh Joint Vice Chair – June Anderson Treasurer – Susan Robertson

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Annual Assurance Statement

In April 2019 the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) introduced new arrangements for regulation of Scottish housing associations and local council landlords. This includes landlords having to submit an "Annual Assurance" statement stating how we comply with the various statutory and regulatory standards.

In our statement we have flagged up that we do not have an up to date Tenant Participation Strategy in place at the moment and we want to be performing better on some Tenants' Charter Indicators. You can read more about how we deal with these matters on Page 9.

You can find our Assurance Statement 2019 and other regulatory reports on our at **www.paragonha.org.uk/facts-figures/regulatory-reports**

You can find out more about Annual Assurance Statements from the SHR's www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/ statutory-guidance/annual-assurance-statement

Foodbank Donations

We will be collecting foodbank donations in the office in the run up to Christmas so please drop off any items if you wish to donate. We aim to deliver donations by 18th December 2019.

Feedback on Domestic Abuse Policy Consultation

Thanks to everyone who responded to our Making A Stand pledge and draft Domestic Violence Policy.

We got some really useful feedback and one thing that we took on board right away was changing the name from "Domestic Violence" to "Domestic Abuse" to reflect the wide ranging scope of the policy.

We will also be looking at the way in which we take referrals for 'safety' features in properties helping families to stay in their homes feeling safer and more secure.



Our homes, our people, our problem.

Freedom of Information

From 11th November 2019 the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies to Scottish registered social landlords. This legislation gives people the right to request information from Scottish public authorities to understand how they work, how they make decisions and on expenditure.

The Association has published a "Guide to Information" based on the Scottish Information Commissioner's Model Scheme of Publications. It has links to a whole host of information about what we do and how we do it.

You can find our Guide to Information and how to make a request for information on our at **www. paragonha.org.uk/about-us/guide-informationpublications.** If you want a copy sent out or need some advice, please give our Corporate Services Team a call on **01324 664966** or email enquiries@paragonha. org.uk.

> **Working Lives** Silver Award Retained With the support of NHS Forth Valley

With the support of INHS Forth Valley we take part in the Healthy Working Lives Award Scheme and are delighted to announce that we have successfully retained our silver award. Well done all involved.

Putting the people we serve at the heart of our services and putting heart into our communities

Garden ompetition Gets Growing

We know its winter now but in a few month's time spring will come along.

March of the Scarecrows

We are excited to be launching two new additions to our annual garden competition. As you can see from the photos of last year's entrants, the standard of gardens across the three council areas is extremely high and the Garden Competition is well supported.

We had a display on the Garden Competition at our AGM in September 2019 and had a discussion with people attending about extending the categories and trying to get younger people involved and bring out your creative side.

Next year we are delighted to be launching a '**March of the Scarecrows**' event, encouraging recycling awareness.

How To Take Part

We are inviting you to create a Scarecrow using recyclable materials.

We have entry five categories:

Individual under 16 years old –

traditional 'garden' setting or communal garden/backcourt – but please speak to your neighbours to agree it

Individual over 16 years old -

traditional 'garden' setting or communal garden/backcourt – but please speak to your neighbours to agree it

Tenant & Resident Group Project

 work together to build one in a communal garden or back court

Community Project – we will be inviting local schools, community groups etc to join in and have a go.

What to do

- Design your scarecrow
- Create it using recyclable materials
- Put it on display
- Send us a picture and your contact details

When your scarecrow is in position take a snap and email it to us at enquiries@paragonha.org.uk telling us your name and address and where the scarecrow is on display. The deadline for entries is Friday 15th March 2020 at 5.00pm.

We will have a look at the entries on site in the last week of March with our independent judges' panel to view the scarecrows and the formal prizes will be awarded at our Annual General Meeting in September 2020.

Sunflower Challenge

Staff at Paragon have held a 'tallest' sunflower challenge for the last couple of years – with varying degrees of success! Next year we would like you to join in the challenge too.

If you grow a sunflower and think it might be a challenger for the tallest, please take a photo of it and email it into us at enquiries@paragonha.org.uk telling us your name and address and how tall your sun flower is – measure from the top of the earth in the pot or ground to the top of the flower – only flowering plants will be accepted.

Deadline date is 21st August 2020.

Judging of the 2020 Garden Competition will take place end of August 2020.

Garden Competition Categories

Best Garden – Clackmannanshire Best Garden - Falkirk/Denny/Stirling Best Garden - Grangemouth Best Beginner – First Time Entrant Best Communal Garden

We'll remind you again closer to the time, but if you are interested entering meantime please get in touch with the Estates Team.





Paragon Housing Association	Telephone: 01324 664966 Website: www.paragonha.org.uk Email: enquiries@paragonha.org.uk	
Out of Hours		
Emergency Reactive Repairs The McDougall Group Out of Hours Gas Repairs City Technical Services	0800 975 1234 0333 202 0708	
For Gas Leaks National Grid Emergency Services	0800 111 999	
Scottish Water Helpline	www.scottishwater.co.uk 0800 0778 778	
Flooding warnings and advice SEPA Floodline	www.sepa.org.uk 0345 9881 188	
Electricity Suppliers - may vary by area		
Scottish Power Energy Networks	Landline: 0800 092 9290 Freephone 105	
Scottish Hydro	0800 300 999	
Note some phones lines may be free from a landline but not from a mobile. Some companies offer online reporting facilities - visit their s for more information.		
Council Bulk / Special Uplifts Please note that arrangement and charges differ in each council area so please contact them direct if you need an uplift. The Estates Team can also provide you with advice on refuse collection and special uplifts.		
Clackmannanshire Council	01259 450000	
Falkirk Council	01324 506070	
Stirling Council	01786 404040	

Winter Preparations

In preparation for winter, check that you know where the stopcock is for the water supply into your home. Turning off the water supply in the event of a leak can prevent a lot of damage to your home and your belongings.

For information on how to deal with burst or frozen pipes visit the web site and download our guide: https://bit.ly/35ZQjYM

Top Tip Know where the stop cock is for the water supply entering your home



OPENING HOURS

The emergency service operates around the clock every day.

Our office is open 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays as detailed below. If the weather is bad and disrupts services then check the for updates or listen to the message on our answer machine.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

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Office Closed

Christmas

Wed 25th/ Thurs 26th / Fri 27th December 2019

New Year

Wed 1st /Thurs 2nd / Fri 3rd January 2020

Only emergency repairs will be carried out during this period and you can find out how to report these by visiting: www.paragonha.org.uk/ our-services/repair-servicesemergencies



Paragon Housing Association Limited Invergrange House, Station Road, Grangemouth FK3 8DG Telephone: 01324 664966 Email: enquiries@paragonha.org.uk www.paragonha.org.uk

SHR Registration Number: HAL 298 Scottish Charity No: SC 036262 Property Factor Registration No: PF000282